

## **Measuring what matters - sustainability indicators and the participatory process**

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During the 1990s, Sustainable Seattle started a movement in central Puget Sound and around the world with its Indicators of Sustainable Community. Each indicator reflected on the quality of life of the region, as illustrated by the quality of our creeks, air, health care, children education, parks, or public transportation. As sustainability indicators, they exposed and built upon the linkages between environmental, cultural and economic health and promoted intergenerational responsibilities. They brought those issues to the community level, the place where action is most likely to take place in response to the trends and conditions exposed by the indicators and helped define the sense of place that makes that action possible. Sustainable Seattle is preparing to re-issue the Indicators of Sustainable Community at the end of 2005.

Drawing on our work in the nineties and the preparation for the current process, we will address the necessary participatory nature of our indicators and the importance of the indicator development process. We will consider the value of the indicators as tools for education, policy-making and as catalyst for change and we will examine how this effort fits in with other indicators of broader geographic scale - Puget Sound, the State of Washington, Cascadia and BC-WA transboundary work.